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The Security Cooperation Process: Assignment, Vetting, and Screening of International Participants

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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

**THE SECURITY COOPERATION PROCESS: ASSIGNMENT,
VETTING, AND SCREENING OF INTERNATIONAL
PARTICIPANTS**

by

Peter D. Bertelsen, Lecturer

May 2018

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ABSTRACT

Security Cooperation, or SC, comprises all activities undertaken by the Department of Defense (DOD) to encourage and enable international partners to work with the United States to achieve strategic objectives. It includes all DOD interactions with foreign defense and security establishments, including all DOD-administered Security Assistance (SA) programs, that build defense and security relationships; promote specific U.S. security interests, including all international armaments cooperation activities and SA activities; develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations; and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to host nations. Education and training opportunities for international students make up an important part of SC. This technical report explains the importance of SC, how students are selected, and the processes for vetting and screening international students before they arrive in the U.S.

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SECURITY COOPERATION

Security Cooperation, or SC, comprises all activities undertaken by the Department of Defense (DOD) to encourage and enable international partners to work with the United States to achieve strategic objectives. It includes all DOD interactions with foreign defense and security establishments, including all DOD-administered Security Assistance (SA) programs, that build defense and security relationships; promote specific U.S. security interests, including all international armaments cooperation activities and SA activities; develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations; and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to host nations.

Eligible foreign governments or international organizations may purchase education and training with their national funds through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. They may also obtain education and training using USG funds provided by SA appropriations (to the Department of State) such as the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, Foreign Military Financing (FMF), and Peacekeeping Operations (PKO).

To request U.S. training and education, partner nation militaries and ministries of defense interface directly with the U.S. DOD representatives in the U.S. embassy, principally the Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) and the Security Cooperation Officers (SCOs)

who are responsible for their country combined education and training program plan, in alignment with the theater campaign support plan and U.S. policy.

Each geographic combatant command (COCOM) is required to host an annual Security Cooperation Education and Training Working Group (SCETWG) to address all SC education and training requirements for countries within its area of responsibility (AOR). The objective of the SCETWG is to review and coordinate the combined education and training program plan for each country in the AOR; to finalize the budget year training program for each country; and to discuss training policy, program, and planning issues.

Attendees at the SCETWGs are the ODC chiefs and training managers from each U.S. embassy in the AOR, SCOs, representatives from the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), the Military Departments (MILDEPs), DOD education and training providers (“schoolhouses” such as DRMI), and other key SC training management personnel. Actual IMET and FMS training programs are submitted, reviewed, and determinations made as to availability of funds and scheduling. DRMI sends a representative to each of the COCOM SCETWGs for informational purposes as they are the primary venue for the planning and programming of international participants to attend DRMI courses, both resident and mobile.

As a tenant organization at the Naval Postgraduate School, DRMI’s international participants and funding comes to NPS via the Naval Education and Training Security Assistance Field Activity (NETSAFA), the U.S. Navy’s agent for international education

and training. NETSAFA country program managers (CPMs) interface directly with the ODCs and SCO in the U.S. embassies, and in turn with DRMI's international military student officer (IMSO) who confirms participant requirements/eligibility, country quotas, and availability in resident courses. Requests for mobile courses are handled through the same process.

All DRMI international participants (officially referred to as "international military students" or "IMS") are fully screened and vetted by multiple U.S. government agencies prior to their arrival at the gate to come onboard NPS. This security screening and vetting includes records of criminal conduct, terrorism, corruption, drugs, human trafficking, human rights abuses, or other activities inconsistent with U.S. policy goals. In addition, the screening includes medical examination for communicable diseases.

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VETTING AND SCREENING

Once selected for attendance, all DRMI international participants, or IMS, arrive at NPS having been fully screened and vetted by multiple U.S. government agencies prior to their arrival. Screening and vetting includes records of criminal conduct, terrorism, corruption, drugs, human trafficking, human rights abuses, or other activities inconsistent with U.S. policy goals as well as proof of medical examination clearing the IMS of communicable diseases.

Policy requirements are established by the DOD's Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), the DOD agency which directs, administers, and provides guidance to the DOD components and DOD representatives to U.S. missions and embassies, for the execution of DOD security cooperation programs for which DSCA has responsibility, which also includes U.S. State Department security assistance funding managed by DSCA. DSCA ensures the Secretary of Defense and Undersecretary of Defense for Policy interests in security assistance matters are represented; identifies requirements, criteria, and procedures for the selection and training of personnel engaged in security assistance activities in DOD security cooperation programs.

The screening and vetting of IMS is handled by the U.S. embassies in country, initiated by the DOD representatives in the embassy Security Cooperation Offices (SCOs), and carried forward by Department of State representatives in the embassy consular section and Department of Homeland Security representatives.

The controlling document for each IMS is a U.S. embassy-issued Invitational Travel Order (ITO), a document showing all conditions and terms of their period of training and education. ITOs are issued to the IMS only after screening and vetting is completed by U.S. authorities in country (prior to departing for the U.S.).

The DSCA Security Assistance Management Manual (SAMM) outlines in detail the specific policies and procedures covering all matters related to security cooperation and security assistance, including the screening and vetting requirements for all IMS. Chapter 10 of the SAMM describes the policies and procedures related to the provision of international training and education provided under security cooperation authorities.

C10.8.1. General. IMS must be screened for records of human rights abuses, drug, terrorism, and human trafficking, corruption, criminal conduct, or other activities inconsistent with U.S. policy goals. If an individual's reputable character cannot be validated, the individual must not be approved for training. Security Cooperation Offices (SCOs) should consult the Department of State (DoS) Leahy vetting requirements, which is available on the Security Assistance Network (SAN) for approved users.

C10.8.2. Age. The minimum age for students receiving SC training is 18 years, or 17 years with parental consent.

C10.8.3. Security. Regardless of the level of classification of the training, in-country U.S. officials must perform a security screening of each student prior to issuance of the Invitation Travel Order (ITO).

C10.8.4. Homeland Security Screening. The SCO will enter IMS individual identification data into the Security Cooperation Training Management System (SC-TMS) a minimum of 16 days prior to report date of the IMS in the United States for training. The required data includes name, date of birth (DOB), and place of birth (POB) consisting of city and country. If the information is not available 16 days prior to training report date, the appropriate military department (MILDEP) will be directed to cancel or re-schedule the training. Forfeiture charges will apply in accordance with the [DOD FMR, Volume 15, Chapter 7.](#)

C10.8.5. Student Medical Screening. Pre-departure medical examinations (conducted within three months preceding the departure of the IMS and authorized accompanying or joining dependents) are required prior to issuance of the ITO. Required medical examinations will be recorded in English on [DD Form 2808 \(Report of Medical Examination\)](#), and [DD Form 2807-1 \(Report of Medical History\)](#). The SCO will provide the forms and assist the IMS with the instructions for completing the forms for IMS and authorized dependents.

C10.8.5.1. Requirements for IMS medical screening.

C10.8.5.1.1. Completed [DD Form 2808](#) and [DD Form 2807-1](#) to include:

C10.8.5.1.1.1. Chest X-ray is taken to determine absence of tuberculosis (TB) or other lung disease. Chest X-ray results will be included on DD Form 2808, block 73. If an individual has or will need to travel to the United States for training more than once in a 12-month period and the chest X-ray prior to the initial training period is documented as negative for active disease, a repeat chest X-ray is not required unless the individual has symptoms of, or a clinical examination finds or suspects, a pulmonary (lung) problem.

C10.8.5.1.1.2. Serological test for HIV. HIV test results will be included on [DD Form 2808, block 49](#). If an individual has or will need to travel to the United States for training more than once in a 12-month period, and the HIV test prior to the initial training period is documented to have been negative, a repeat HIV test is not required unless the individual has symptoms of, or a clinical examination finds or suspects HIV.

C10.8.5.1.1.3. A statement verifying IMS is free of “communicable disease of public health significance,” will be included on [DD Form 2808, block 73](#). A “communicable disease of public health significance” is defined by the Department of Health and Human Services. The SCO should contact the U.S.

Consular Section/U.S. Embassy for the most current list of communicable diseases.

As noted, the Invitational Travel Order (ITO) is the controlling document for training and education provided to international students by U.S. government authorities under security cooperation training and education programs. No student enters a SC-sponsored training program without a properly completed ITO. The ITO provides the authorization for the dates and location the IMS is to receive training; the accounting fund cite that will be used to pay for the training; the guidance for determining what support the IMS is entitled to; and the privileges the IMS may be entitled to while receiving training. The SCO is responsible for the preparation, explanation, and issuance of an ITO for each student. The IMS name on the ITO will be the same as on the country-issued passport and visa. ITOs are issued only after the student security screening and vetting process is completed.

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